

2014 STATE OF THE CITY

MAYOR TERRY SEITZ

As mayor of Jasper, I find it that we have many more opportunities than we have challenges and that both of them call for action. It has been my directive for city officials, boards and departments to engage the public in our opportunities and our issues as much as possible. We have done so with the help of City employees, department leaders, citizen boards and elected officials.

In fulfilling our role as a public conduit for taxpayers and ratepayers in 2013, we had three major public input sessions on planning - averaging 120 people at each. Our new website enables better connectivity and communication and the investment in new audio and video equipment in the Council Chambers benefits the public and those keeping public records.

Our next steps are to continue action on five areas of strategic focus for the City government:

- A Sense of Place
- Infrastructure
- Effective Governance
- Telling & Selling
- Working with Others

What follows is a report on our endeavors in these areas for 2013:

A Sense of Place

Now more than ever, Americans seek a community before a career. Think of it as looking for software first, then a computer to make it work. It is essential for Jasper to continue to enhance our livability to compete with larger cities for residents and jobs.

This is precisely why we accepted the call from our 2010 Comprehensive Plan to create a vision for our downtown and riverfront areas. The newly-adopted Jasper Downtown & Riverfront Master Plan calls for action in five areas:

- Courthouse Square
- Enhancing the City's Relationship to the River
- Reuse of the Former Industrial Properties
- Downtown Connectivity
- Integrating Art Into the Public Realm

Through public meetings involving more than 300 attendees, interviews and thorough discussion with officials, City *Visions* of Louisville and Gamble Associates of Boston, have given us a tremendous blueprint. We are already moving forward on the plan in many ways including a design phase as well as continuing conversations with parties interested in becoming part of downtown Jasper. Over the last 10 years, the City has invested more than \$1.5M in materials and in-kind services in our downtown and riverfront. It is an investment which continues to provide return.

It is with this same drive we are working to enhance our community with "The Parklands of Jasper" on the grounds of the former Jasper Country Club. The public has guided us to declaring this once-in-a-lifetime property a passive park with managed meadows and natural spaces unlike any other public land in Jasper.

The leverage for this purchase was our ownership of four unused or under-utilized properties. I believe selling these parcels will enable us to fully restore the loan we made from our Rainy Day fund while placing publicly-owned land back into the tax base.

Infrastructure

Today's decisions about utilities, streets, zoning and planning shape our future 5, 10 or 25 years down the road. We are engaging citizens to help us with review of our zoning and sub-division control ordinances this year.

At the recommendation by our Stormwater Board, the Common Council approved a self-funded \$2.5M Strategic Stormwater Initiative over the next seven years. Phase I of this effort begins in the summer of 2014.

We are part of a \$544,000 grant through the Indiana Housing & Community Development Authority to voluntarily purchase and clear property in the flood-prone areas between South Main and South Jackson Streets.

We funded and are conducting a hydrology study between the Patoka River Bridges to help us ascertain the parameters of riverside development and recreation.

An application to have acreage in the City of Jasper declared a State of Indiana Shovel-Ready Site is being prepared with financial assistance from Dubois Strong and the Indiana Municipal Power Agency (IMPA).

We began a study of our aquatic needs which is guided by the expected equipment failure cycle of our 60-year old public pool and the changing landscape of aquatics in the nation as well as in Southern Indiana.

The connectivity of Dubois County to I-69 with a 4-lane Interstate-grade highway is essential for sustaining and growing our community.

Effective Governance

In 2013, we paid off the bond for the Sports Complex and we're currently debt-free even though we're working with more than \$1M less revenue the last 4 years due to the Indiana mandated property tax caps.

We are in a continual improvement mode in City government focusing on internal processes and decision-making. We invested in a completely new City website which delivers far more opportunities for the public to connect with its government. www.jasperindiana.gov

We also invested in a new audio/video system for the City Hall Council Chambers. This helps those who attend meetings as well as those who use our recordings for assembling public records.

We worked through IMPA to conduct numerous energy reduction programs at Jasper homes and businesses in 2013.

Our ReJuvenate Jasper Employee Wellness Program encourages healthier lifestyles for City staff and saved money in our healthcare coverage.

Telling & Selling

We have a great City with an authentic story to share with others. To meet our local employers' projected growth and sustain our standard of living we need more citizens and we will be working on recruiting efforts with partners such as Dubois Strong.

This is a key reason for the design of a new logo for the City of Jasper. The brand will be incorporated into many uses in the ensuing months.

Being responsive to citizens and media is an essential element of our department leaders' workday and we encourage our departments and boards to be accessible.

Some of our best communications occur through use of our public programs and spaces via the Jasper Arts Department and the Jasper Park & Recreation Department which annually reach tens of thousands of citizens, guests and visitors.

Working with Others

We are intrinsically connected with other community-builders and we strive daily to represent Jasper's interests with county, state and federal officials and entities. Jasper officials are active members in the Indiana Association of Cities & Towns. I have been elected to serve as the Vice-President of the Southern Indiana Mayor's Roundtable group and our department leaders are actively involved in professional associations and organizations.

Ultimately, success is measured by how well we execute these strategies. It is apparent here at home and around the state that Jasper is making moves. I am honored to be a part of the progress.



Mayor Terry Seitz



13 SIGNIFICANT ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2013 FOR THE CITY OF JASPER

- 1 Official adoption of the Downtown Jasper/Riverfront Master Plan.
- 2 Purchase of the former Jasper Country Club golf course and planning for its use as a park.
- 3 Tremendous public input for both of these projects – an average of 120 citizens at three sessions.
- 4 German American Boulevard and along with it, a revision of the agreement between the City and ROJAC – involving the City Plan Commission in the process.
- 5 More involvement from Redevelopment Commission and Economic Development Commission and creating synergy between these two boards as well as our utilities.
- 6 A major review of zoning and sub-division control ordinances is now underway.
- 7 Activation of new City of Jasper website.
- 8 Introduction of a new City logo and the effort to establish it as a brand.
- 9 Implementation of an aquatic needs study by the Park & Recreation Board.
- 10 Major improvements to Kluemper Road and Sunshine Drive.
- 11 Implementing a 7-year Strategic Stormwater Initiative with fully funded from an increase in equivalent residential unit (ERU) fees.
- 12 Replacement of more than a mile of old water line along 3rd Avenue.
- 13 Preparation of an application for an official Indiana Shovel-ready Site within City limits.

**“Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by
the things you didn’t do than by the ones you did do.
Explore. Dream. Discover.”**

Mark Twain ~ American author



2013 HIGHLIGHTS & 2014 GOALS OF THE DEPARTMENTS OF THE CITY OF JASPER AND JASPER MUNICIPAL UTILITIES

POLICE – Chief Michael Bennett

812.482.2255

2013 Activities

Replaced retiring officers with new recruits: Greg Brescher, David Burger, Dakota Foote, Grant Goffinet and Communication Officer Dan Collins.

Acquired Ares, our new K-9 unit, and trained Officer Adam Bower as his handler.

Participated in numerous Training Schools for newly promoted Sergeants and Communications Chief; Instructor Development School for an officer who will be another Firearms instructor for the department school/work place; Violence training for our safety officer assisting local schools and local business in the assessment of their security issues.

All Jasper Officers were certified in NCIC/IDACS mobile authorizations.

Revised office uniform styles and patrol car insignia.

2014 Goals

Working closely with the Humane Society to reduce the number of animal complaints.

Reduce the number of vehicle crashes with in the city with emphasis on the causation factors.

Upgrade the communication system via the 800mgh portable radios.

Continue working closely with the schools and local business with their threat assessments and security plans.

Research pay differential for night shift officers.

Consider the addition of more officers to the department.

Continue making training a priority.

2013 Activities

Kluemper Road – improved drainage by installing new and replacing existing storm sewers where needed. Widened and reconstructed street pavement. Widening included creating a walking path between Deer Creek and Red Oak Subdivisions.

Sunshine Drive – improved drainage by installing new and replacing existing storm sewers where needed. Widened and reconstructed street pavement.

Salt Brine Building – constructed using Street Dept. employees. This building will aid in the efficient manufacturing of salt brine and storage of snow fighting and other equipment.

Resource Recovery Site – started processes of reusing materials brought to the site. These processes include: the grinding of tree limbs, to be used as mulch; the grinding of yard waste, the composting of collected tree leaves, and combination of fill dirt to be used in our top soil making program; and the crushing of concrete and asphalt to be used in construction projects. The purpose is to lessen the need for a fill area and utilize the staging areas provided by the purchase of this property.

Sidewalk at 2nd Street between Alumni Stadium and Clay Street - made grade for sidewalk contractor, backfilled behind new sidewalk, improved drainage near stadium, and stabilized bank with hydro-seeder or stone.

6th and Newton (Sternberg Furniture) – removed dead tree, removed planter box, replaced planter box, and poured new sidewalk.

14th Street between Mill and Vine – replaced storm sewer and inlets to improve drainage between Mill and Dewey Streets along the south side and assisted contractor with removal and replacement of sidewalk. Sidewalk was replaced along both sides of 14th Street from Mill to Vine Streets.

2014 Goals

Improve drainage and widen Lechner Lane from Andrew Lane intersection north to curbed sections.

Continue utilizing the Resource Recovery Site for the benefit of the City of Jasper's construction debris and residential yard waste removal and reuse.

Correct as many storm sewer problems as possible, from the 200+ work orders already documented.

Continue asphalt pavement preservation practices.

Conduct nighttime traffic sign reflectivity survey as mandated by Federal regulations.

2013 Activities

The Engineering department, in cooperation with the Jasper Stormwater Board and our subsidiary Storm Water Department led the inquiry into a Strategic Stormwater Initiative – a seven year program to eliminate dozens of stormwater issues within the City. The first rate study since the program's inception resulted in a solution of self-funding the \$2.5 million project rather than the more expensive bonding option. Utility customers in the City of Jasper will pay a minimum of \$3.96 for an ERU rather than \$2.00 effective with the new year. Other major stormwater projects completed occurred on Hartford Drive, repairs to a collapse along South Newton and Phase I of the Krodel/Braun Project

The department completed a comprehensive revision of City Design Standards and Specifications.

The department worked with consulting engineers on a solution to the collapsed ornamental wall at the City Mill and setting parameters for a hydrology study along the Patoka River.

City Hall receiving engineering oversight included replacement of gutters, replacement of boilers and upgrading of the audio-visual system in the Council Chambers.

2014 Goals

The Engineering Department will kick off Phase I of the Strategic Stormwater Initiative and continue with Phase II of Krodel/Braun project.

The Patoka River hydrology and hydraulic study will be undertaken and bids will be sought for repair to the wall below the City Mill. This project will also include an environmentally friendly bank stabilization effort. Depending on the outcome of the wall modification, it is hoped the City Mill parking lot can be upgraded.

A sidewalk extension along 3rd Avenue will link the City Mill/Riverwalk to nearby visitor areas.

Correcting/updating right-of-way issues along 5th Avenue.

2013 Activities

The department responded to 449 calls.

The Jasper Fire Department is now utilizing State of Indiana Software for FIRE and EMS reporting which will streamline reporting and improve efficiency of reporting.

We also continue to assist and provide necessary tools and equipment for the Dubois County Fire School held at the Jasper High School.

We have increased participation in on-site visits with the State Fire Marshall's office during new construction or remodeling of buildings within our coverage area.

We maintain all certifications to keep ISO rating at current level.

2014 Goals

Officer training will continue for all Fire Department Officers. This will improve their knowledge in scene safety.

We are changing our training sessions to include handouts for members to review outside of the session. We have dedicated training officers that will lead this change.

PERSONNEL/SAFETY/LOSS CONTROL – Cale Knies**812.482.4255****2013 Activities**

We implemented our *ReJuvenate Jasper* Employee Wellness Program and incorporated the Affordable Care Act into our Employee Benefit Trust program.

Retirement or resignations created the need to hire eight fulltime employees and a part-time position was elevated to fulltime.

We rejoiced in the receipt of three safety awards for our Wastewater Department:

- Indiana Water Environmental Association Safety Excellence Award.
- George W. Burke Facility Safety Award by Water Environment Federation.
- L.L. Larson Safety Award was given to Wastewater employee, Mark Pierce

2014 Goals

We are working to be recertified in the Indiana Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (INSHARP).

We will seek legal review of our Employee Handbook.

2013 Activities

The department accepted oversight of a major new development, The Parklands of Jasper, on the grounds of the former Jasper Country Club Golf Course. The 58-acre property was purchased by the City Redevelopment Commission in April and planning for its use is being prepared by City *Visions* and Gamble Associates.

The department entered into a contract with Hafer Associates to assess the community's aquatic needs. The aging of the existing pool, the impact of private pools, the enjoyment of the splash pad at Central Green and nearby private aquatic facilities will all be considered in a final report.

The department and the Gas & Water Department coordinated public meetings concerning the levels of Beaver Lake following the completion of the new spillway. The Utility Service Board made a decision to fund a forensic engineering study of the situation and, subsequently, to fund an engineering study seeking a solution.

Licenses to sell beer and alcohol were acquired by the Jasper and Ruxer Municipal Golf Courses in early summer. Total revenue was \$28,561.00 at Muni and \$4,485.00 at Ruxer. Area golf marketers encouraged the City to consider changing the name of the muni because it was not being well received when marketing golf to areas outside of the city. At the January, 2014 meeting the Park & Recreation Board selected the name of Buffalo Trace Golf Course from 168 names were submitted by the public. The name will be adapted immediately.

The Spirit of Jasper continued to captivate riders from all across the Midwest with the majority of rides 100% full. The addition of a special car known as The Monon Car increased capacity while permitting a full-service dining experience. The 2013 schedule included 28 long trips and 7 Strassenfest trips for a total of 3,189 passengers and \$115,075.00 in revenue – a 51% increase since 2011. About \$20,000 of additional monies were generated by private charters and depot rentals.

2013 bookings of other park areas included: 24 special events, 16 walk/runs, 8 gazebo and 2 barn wedding ceremonies, 103 shelter house rentals at Dave Buehler Plaza, Jaycee Park or Bohnert Park, 67 meetings and 26 parties at the Train Depot.

The Jasper Youth Sports Complex hosted full seasons of recreation league action for youth in baseball and softball. In addition, 12 tournaments were held bringing hundreds of players and thousands of fans to Jasper. The participants complimented the two restrooms which were built with a combination of funding sources including donations by booster organizations.

Jasper and our extraordinary Jasper City Mill were hosts of the 2013 Society for Preservation of Old Mills (SPOOM) national conference this past summer.

Attendance at the Arnold F. Habig Community Center continues to rise for all events and as a central gathering spot for senior citizens. Also, the community room was rented 72 times.

PARK & RECREATION – continued

2014 Goals

We are working to open The Parklands of Jasper property in the summer of 2014

An aquatic needs study was authorized and is currently underway.

We are currently working on an additional 40 to 50 parking spaces to be added to the West lot of the Jasper Youth Sports Complex.

We will leverage the renaming of the golf course to Buffalo Trace Golf Course by partnering with the Dubois County Visitors Center to market the course to golfers outside of Jasper.

We will consider the benefits and costs of having a golf pro on staff.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING – Darla Blazey

812.482.4255

2013 Activities

Downtown& Riverfront Master Plan adopted as an extension of the Comprehensive Plan.

Completion and implementation of new City of Jasper Website and introduction of a new City logo/branding effort.

Building Permits up over previous year. New Single family home construction up 55% over 2012.

Piloted tax Phase-In for Jasper Chair and updates from other five recipients.

Worked consultants on planning for The Parklands of Jasper.

2014 goals

Pursuit of Indiana Stellar Community program.

Coordinate review of our zoning and subdivision control ordinances – first since 1993.

Secure awarding of Indiana Shovel-ready designation for the Kimball Industrial Park.

Working with the Redevelopment Commission on a creation of TIF District.

2013 Activities

We celebrated our 10th annual Chalk Walk Family Arts Festival.

We continued our newest performing arts series, New Directions, which is aimed at a younger market. It is now outselling our Traditional series.

Our Senior Outreach Series garnered tremendous response from performances at senior resident homes Jasper.

Krempp Gallery was renovated with all new gallery display units which were built in-house with major support from Jim and Pat Thyen. The new displays are on wheels, allowing us to change the gallery space monthly. People are surprised at how big the gallery actually is.

Our regional arts-in-education footprint was expanded by subcontracting with the Dubois County Community Foundation to manage a free arts program (*Golden Dragon Acrobats*) for all county school districts. We also offer regional schools the opportunity to attend our school programs which creates an additional revenue stream.

The Clint Black performance was a sell-out.

2014 Goals

We must continue to adapt to the changing needs of our community, especially in light of the aging population and audience; keeping our programs fresh and exciting and being competitive with other entertainment sources.

We must keep up with technology. We currently have a website, blog and use Facebook constantly. In 2014, we wish to roll out a mobile app which will allow people on the go to access our latest programming instantly. Eventually we want to go with online ticketing. We currently have the capability but do have not yet employed it.

Growing into a leadership role for the arts in the city and the region.

Develop our next five-year plan.

2013 Activities

Total combined sales of electricity, natural gas, water and wastewater services are approximately \$39.75 million. The electrical department did have a decrease in yearly net revenue compared to 2012 and a current electric rate study will provide recommendations to consider.

Jasper Utilities investigated renewable energy and clean energy projects in 2013 and will continue in 2014 pursuing projects such as the Jasper Clean Energy Center, compressed natural gas vehicles and filling station, possible joint solar project with IMPA, and others.

Energizing Indiana was utilized by most of the City and Utility departments for rebates on energy saving projects. Numerous commercial and industrial clients also benefitted from Energizing Indiana's rebate program. The residential energy assessment program benefitted local homeowners and non-profits. Although Energizing Indiana will not be available next year, IMPA is planning to continue their own rebate program with the possibility of expanding its scope of rebates, and other energy saving incentives.

Request for proposals were sent out and received in 2013 for the construction and maintenance of a fiber network to connect City and Utility facilities. Hopefully, a vendor will be selected in early 2014 to complete the construct of the network. Fiber to the Premise (FTTP) build out options have also been discussed and plans to promote any such project are ongoing.

A study of the City Hall telephone system is being performed and plans are to replace the old system in 2014. The new system will have the capacity to incorporate other departments via the new fiber network as the need arises. Aggregating other department's phone lines and equipment with City Hall will make the entire system more efficient thus saving operational costs.

2014 Goals

The Utilities initiated a wage/benefit compensation study in 2013 and expects a report in 2014 that will help assess the level of compensation of selected skilled utility employees. Skilled employees are not easily replaced, so ensuring a competitive compensation package is critical for retaining the investment made in their training.

The study of the Beaver Lake water level is in process and hopefully a determination will be made in 2014 on how to proceed.

2013 Activities

Jasper Municipal Utilities continues to explore alternative energy resources beyond the conversion of our coal-fired electric plant to a gas-advanced biomass facility through our lease with Jasper Clean Energy including CNG (Compressed Natural Gas) and solar. Therefore, we joined the Greater Indiana Clean Cities Coalition.

Jasper Municipal Utilities updated to the new City website and is now able to offer more customer forms online and ability to report problems to specific departments directly. This assists in our efforts to streamline our processes through better utilization of our software.

Annual revenue of the Jasper Municipal Utilities in 2012 was \$39.3 million. Due to our strong customer base and a focus on past-due collections, only \$9,847.21 of debt was written off.

2014 Goals

We are exploring the potential of a solar electric generating facility in the City of Jasper with our electricity partners at the Indiana Municipal Power Agency.

We anticipate Implementing credit card and online bill utility payments.

ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT – Jerry Schitter**812.482.6881****2013 Activities**

In 2013, the Electric Department conducted a department reorganization to create a leaner work environment. The changes included a new position called Lead Lineman, a position of more responsibility. Also, the custodian position was revised to Facilities Maintenance Technician with more responsibilities.

The Jasper Electric Department changed over primary voltage electric lines from overhead to underground in Golden Acres Subdivision.

We also installed primary 3 phase underground electric lines and set pad mount transformers for the expansion of Northwood Good Samaritan Nursing Home and the renovated Klubhaus 61.

We played a partnership role with ROJAC by installing decorative lighting and electric service at the new German American Boulevard.

ELECTRIC DEPARTMENT – continued

2014 Goals

We will retrofit light fixture in Downtown Jasper with LED systems for more energy conservation.

We will paint older downtown decorative light poles black to match the more recent installations.

WASTEWATER – Ed Hollinden

812.482.3277

2013 Activities

The wastewater department accepted 46 new connections to the system in 2013, the most since 2008. In turn, we treated 898.85 million gallons of water – 2.5 MGD average. Our plant is designed to handle 3.6 MGD. This productivity created 418.1 tons of bio-solids for use on farm grounds.

261 sewer laterals were inspected in our mandatory program with 108 failures

The department participated in the Energizing Indiana's energy audit program. The results of replacing or upgrading lights and installing VFDs yielded \$5,828.00 in rebates and energy savings for years to come.

2014 Goals

We face a significant improvement project in 2014 in the replacement of our digester membranes. This is the gray domed building on our wastewater campus along Indiana Avenue on Jasper's south side. The digester permits us to use the methane gas we create and through a co-generation system turn it into electricity and heat. The new membranes will cost \$322,000 and have a lifespan of 12-15 years. We save \$88,000 a year by turning the methane produced by the digester into electricity and heat.

We have budget to reline approximately 2000 ft. of sewers.

We will continue upgrading or replacing inefficient lighting in the plant.

2013 Activities

Longtime Gas & Water Department staff member, Ernie Hinkle, assumed the position of department manager in July following the retirement of Mike Oeding. With this action, Ernie received approval to reorganize the department. In doing so, Mike Dorsam was appointed Gas & Water Distribution Foreman and Brad Thomas was promoted to Water & Gas Engineer.

The Gas Department has installed a new odorant injector system at the A.N.R. purchasing station which gives natural gas a “rotten egg” smell. This is a public safety feature.

The Water Distribution has been busy locating, mapping and exercising underground valves on the distribution mains. These valves need to be in good working order and must be able to isolate sections of the system for repairs and maintenance.

The Water Filtration Plant pumped over 591,000,000 gallons of safe drinking water in 2013 while the lab completed 2,276 water quality samples for other cities, businesses, and swimming pools. In addition, we were able to obtain a land application permit for Dubois and Pike County sites to dispose of the plant’s lagoon sludge and we completed successful inspections of clear wells and two of our water towers.

2014 Goals

In 2014 we have plans to upgrade certain distribution natural gas mains so that we can improve the quality of our system. By doing this we can eliminate a couple of our regulating stations, which will cut costs by no longer needing to be maintained with labor and parts. We also plan to upgrade some of the main regulating stations which will make them more reliable and responsive of the ever changing natural gas needs of the city.

The water distribution plans on eliminating older mains in certain parts of the city by rerouting service lines to newer mains that are already in place. Also, we will be looking at replacing some of the older mains. With the introduction of plastic mains within the city, the cost of replacing these older mains is more feasible.

The water filtration has plans for this next year to upgrade the filtration system including the possibility of installing an Ultra-Violet (UV) treatment system to comply with new regulations.